Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 STATE 021636

62
ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 OMB-01 NIC-01 SAJ-01 AID-20

NEA-11 /163 R

DRAFTED BY INR/REA:ESCOLBERT,DRAVERY/LAR
APPROVED BY INR/DRR:DEMARK
INR/REA:WCHAMILTON
EA/LC:STHOMSEN (SUBS)
EA/PRCM:TSBROOKS (SUBS)
---------- 039865
R 011910Z FEB 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
CINCURSARPAC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T STATE 021636

SECRET
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 021636

NO FOREIGN DISSEM, CONTROLLED DISSEM

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PFOR, CH, XC, LA, VN
SUBJECT: PRC-DRV RELATIONS IN LAOS: COOPERATION OR COMPETITION?

REFERENCE: HONG KONG 12522, VIENTIANE 8721 (NOTAL)

FOLLOWING IS THE ABSTRACT OF AN INR RESEARCH STUDY ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP OF PEKING AND HANOI IN LAOS AS IT HAS DEVELOPED TO DATE AND SPECULATING ON FUTURE POSSIBILITIES. SUBSEQUENT STUDIES IN THIS SERIES WILL DEAL WITH THE RELATIONSHIP IN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA.

1. HANOI'S LEADERSHIP IN DETERMINING COMMUNIST POLICY IN LAOS IS LONGSTANDING BUT THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE CONSULTATION AND EVEN COORDINATION WITH THE CHINESE WHOSE SECURITY INTERESTS ARE MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND WHOSE POTENTIAL FOR DIRECT INTERVENTION IS FAR GREATER THAN IN CAMBODIA. THIS HAS SET SOME LIMITS ON HANOI'S FREEDOM OF ACTION, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE CHINESE HAVE SOUGHT TO DISPLACE HANOI OR ACT IN THE FACE OF ITS OBJECTIONS. DESPITE OCCASIONAL DISAGREEMENT OVER TACTICS, CHINESE AND NORTH VIETNAMESE POLICIES HAVE BEEN GENERALLY CONGRUENT.

2. CHINESE ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN NORTHWEST LAOS IS A PRIME

EXAMPLE OF THIS MUTUALLY REINFORCING RELATIONSHIP. THE CONSTRUCTION THAT BEGAN COVERTLY IN 1968 SERVED TWO IMMEDIATE PURPOSES: FACILITATING SUPPLY TO THE PL/NVA; AND, AT A TIME OF HEIGHTENED WARFARE IN THE COUNTRY AT LARGE, STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNISTS IN NORTHWESTERN LAOS, WHERE PL/NVA ACTIVITIES WERE BEING CHALLENGED BY US-SUPPORTED RLG OPERATIONS. THE NEARLY 300-MILE ROAD SYSTEM PROVIDES GREATER BORDER SECURITY AND IMPROVED ACCESS FOR THE CHINESE IN A TRADITIONALLY UNSTABLE AREA; THE PLA PRESENCE HAS HELPED DETER ANTI-COMMUNIST COUN-

TERACTION AND ENABLED THE PATHET LAO TO EXPAND AND CON-

SOLIDATE THEIR POSITION. UNCOMPLETED ROUTES TOWARD AREAS OF INSURGENCY IN THAILAND AND BURMA HAVE A LOGISTIC CAPACITY FAR IN EXCESS OF CURRENT INSURGENT NEEDS, BUT THE CHINESE CONSTRUCTION EFFORT SERVES AS A FORM OF POLITICAL PRESSURE.

3. WHILE TYING THE REGION CLOSER TO CHINA, THE ROAD SYSTEM, WITH ITS LINK TO THE MAIN NORTHERN ARTERY FROM

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

THE DRV, HAS ALSO IMPROVED NORTH VIETNAMESE ACCESS. THE NORH VIETNAMESE MAINTAIN MUCH THE SAME CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PATHET LAO IN THIS AREA AS IN OTHERS WHERE THEIR INPUT IS GREATER, WHILE THE CHINESE, DESPITE THEIR LARGE MILITARY PRESENCE, SEEM TO HAVE AVOIDED DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN PL/NVA MILITARY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. THE CHINESE, NOW IN THE PROCESS OF WITHDRAWING THEIR AIR DEFENSE AND AT LEAST SOME OF THEIR INFANTRY FORCES, APPEAR TO BE ENGAGED IN NEW CONSTRUCTION ON ONLY ONE ROUTE; REDUCTION OF THE ENGINEERING FORCE MAY THUS BE IMMINENT ALSO. IN ANY EVENT, PEKING MAY MAKE THE ROAD SYSTEM PART OF AN AID PACKAGE ONCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS IN PLACE, BUT IN FACT, THE PATHET LAO WILL INHERIT THE ROADS AS THE CHINESE WITHDRAW.

4. HARMONY BETWEEN PEKING AND HANOI ON LAOS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY DISTURBED ONLY BETWEEN 1968 AND 1970. AT THAT TIME, IN ACCORD WITH THEIR ALREADY EVIDENT MISGIVINGS OVER NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN NORTH VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR GENERALLY INFLEXIBLE CULTURAL REVOLUTION FOREIGN POLICY, THE CHINESE MADE CLEAR THEIR PREFERENCE FOR UNCOMPROMISING "PROTRACTED STRUGGLE" OVER THE PL/DRV NEGOTIATION PROPOSALS. NEVERTHELESS, CHINESE LOGISTIC SUPPORT APPARENTLY CONTINUED UNABATED. BY MIDAUGUST 1970, PEKING HAD BEGUN TO MOVE TOWARD THE PL/DRV NEGOTIATING POSITION AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, AS THEIR OVERALL FOREIGN POLICY WAS DRAMATICALLY ALTERED, THE CHINESE

ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN LAOS.

5. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN LAOS SEEMS COMPATIBLE WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF BOTH HANOI AND PEKING. HANOI PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT ITS OWN MILITARY PRE-EMINENCE THERE AND THE DESIRE OF ALL CONCERNED TO KEEP LAOS FROM ONCE MORE BECOMING AN ACTIVE WAR THEATRE CONSTITUTE ABOUT AS GOOD SAFEGUARDS AGAINST INTERFERENCE WITH ITS LOGISTIC USE OF THE PANHANDLE AS IT IS LIKELY TO GET. MEANWHILE, ITS PATHET LAO ALLIES, OBLIGATED TO HANOI FOR YEARS OF ASSISTANCE, ARE IN A MUCH BETTER POSITION TO EXTEND THEIR POLITICAL POWER WITHOUT HAVING TO DRAW IN ANY SUBSTANTIAL WAY ON NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY SUPPORT. WHILE STILL COMMITTED TO EVENTUAL PATHET LAO TAKEOVER, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE SAID PRIVATELY THAT, MEANWHILE, THEY SEE CONSIDERABLE MERIT IN AN OSTENSIBLY NEUTRALIZED LAOS, WHERE THEIR OWN INFLUENCE WOULD BE STRONG AND U.S. INFLUENCE MINIMIZED AND WHICH WOULD SERVE AS A BUFFER BETWEEN NORTH VIETNAM AND THAILAND.

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

6. THE TERMINATION OF THAI AND AMERICAN MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN LAOS IS COMPATIBLE WITH PEKING'S LONG-STANDING SECURITY PREOCCUPATIONS AS WELL AS WITH ITS MORE IMMEDIATE INTEREST IN DETENTE WITH THE U.S. AND MORE CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA. TO ASSURE ITSELF A SIGNIFICANT VOICE IN LAOS, PEKING CAN BE EXPECTED TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE DIPLOMATICALLY IN VIENTIANE. WHETHER THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WILL VIEW THIS AS INIMICAL TO THEIR INTERESTS REMAINS TO BE SEEN; IN THE PAST, AT LEAST, THEY HAVE SEEMED TO VIEW SUCH CHINESE POLICIES AS REINFORCING RATHER THAN COMPETING. IN ADDITION, THE CHINESE PROBABLY WILL WANT CLOSER CONTACTS WITH THE PATHET LAO TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MOST COHESIVE POLITICAL FORCE ON THE LAO SCENE BUT NOT NECESSARILY TO UNDERCUT HANOI. SOME EXPANSION OF CHINESE RELATIONS WITH THE PATHET LAO WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BUT, SINCE THEY ARE INHERENTLY WARY OF THE CHINESE, THEY WILL JEALOUSLY GUARD THEIR OWN "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP."

7. OPPOSITION TO A COMMON ENEMY MAY NO LONGER BE AS STRONG A UNIFYING FORCE IN SINO-DRV RELATIONS VIS-A-VIS LAOS, BUT BOTH COUNTRIES ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW SIMILAR POLICIES FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, IF FOR SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT

REASONS. THEY SEEM PREPARED TO SEE A PERIOD OF RELATIVE STABILITY AND TRANQUILITY AND TO PURSUE THEIR INTERESTS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE RECENT CEASE-FIRE AND POLITICAL

SETTLEMENT, ALTHOUGH NVA TROOPS ARE CERTAIN TO REMAIN AT LEAST IN THE PANHANDLE. FRICTION MAY RESULT SHOULD HANOI COME TO FEEL THAT AN ACTIVE CHINESE POLITICAL POSTURE THREATENS ITS PREROGATIVES AND DISAGREEMENTS OVER POLICY

MAY RECUR. HOWEVER, SERIOUS SINO-NORTH VIETNAMESE RIVALRY IN LAOS IS MORE LIKELY TO BE A BY-PRODUCT OF A SIGNIFICANT DETERIORATION IN THE LARGER RELATIONSHIP THAN OF LOCAL FACTORS ALONE. PEKING PROBABLY DOES NOT EXCLUDE THIS DEVELOPMENT IN ITS PLANNING, BUT PROBABLY DOES NOT REGARD IT AS SO LIKELY THAT IT MUST TAKE ACTION IN LAOS NOW THAT WOULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE PRESENT RELATIONS WITH HANOI. IN OUR VIEW, CHINESE ACTIONS IN LAOS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE WILL BE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT EVEN THOUGH HANOI RETAINS ITS LEADERSHIP WITH RESPECT TO LAOS, PEKING WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT VOICE. KISSINGER

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

NNN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, CONSTRUCTION, HIGHWAYS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: rowelle0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE021636
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ESCOLBERT,DRAVERY/LAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740261/aaaacfgj.tel
Line Count: 217
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: HONG KONG 12522, VIENTIANE 8721 (NOT, AL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: rowelle0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <27-Sep-2002 by rowelle0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRC-DRV RELATIONS IN LAOS: COOPERATION OR COM- PETITION?
TAGS: PFOR, CH, XC, LA, VN
To: HONG KONG MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005